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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, Agir ensemble pour les droits de l'homme, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), the Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, New Human Rights, North South XXI, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), Women against Rape, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the World Organization against Torture, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, Aliran Kesedaran Negara - National Consciousness Movement, the Asociación Kunas Unidos por Napguana, the International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movement, the International Institute for Peace and the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 April 2001]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organizations.

Statement on the situation of Human Rights in Iran

Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, former designated successor to Khomeini, Iran's Supreme Leader at the time, recently made public shocking documents on one of the most horrifying massacres of the 20th century, which took place in 1988, in Iran.

He revealed the text of Khomeini's fatwa in Summer 1988, which read in part: "Those who are in prisons throughout the country and remain steadfast in their support for the Monafeqin [Mojahedin], are waging war on God and are condemned to execution." ... Annihilate the enemies of Islam immediately. As regards the cases, use whichever criterion that speeds up the implementation of the [execution] verdict."

Montazeri revealed that on July 31, 1988, only three days after the beginning of this bloody massacre, some 3,800 persons were executed. On the same day, in a letter to Khomeini, he wrote: "At least order to spare women who have children and finally, the execution of several thousand prisoners in a few days will not have positive repercussions and will not be mistake-free."

Montazeri emphasized: "A large number of prisoners have been killed under torture by their interrogators... In some prisons of the Islamic Republic young girls are being raped by force... As a result of unruly torture, many prisoners have become deaf or paralysed or afflicted with chronic diseases."

Iran's current leaders, including Khamenei, Khatami and Rafsanjani, as well as the officials in charge of the Judiciary, played the primary role in this massacre. The state-run daily Iran News, made a reference to this massacre on April 9, 2000: "The decree was issued at a time when President Khatami, was the deputy to the Commander of the Armed Forces Staff in ideological and cultural affairs. He implemented the Imam (Khomeini)'s decree most decisively."

The gross human rights violations in Iran did not end in 1988. Professor Maurice Copithorne, the UN Human Rights Commission's Special Representative on Iran wrote in his report to the General Assembly this year that executions have continued at "a high rate"; "torture is practised in its most primitive form"; "women and religious minorities are seriously discriminated against in law and in practice" and that "the freedom of the press in the period under study has been catastrophic".

Under these dreadful circumstances, the claim of improvement in the situation of human rights by the delegation of the Iranian regime, before the Commission, is nothing but a hallow slogan. Prof. Maurice Copithorne, wrote in his report to the fifty-seventh session of the Commission that "breaches of human rights are in large part as egregious today as they were five years ago". In his speech to the Commission he added: "in some key areas, it seems hard to accept that there has been any substantive and quantifiable improvements since President Khatami took office".

If this regime was sincere in its claims, over the past five years it would have allowed the Special Representative to visit Iran.

The continuing flagrant violations of human rights in Iran and the shocking massacres of 1988 are irrefutable cases of crimes against humanity and their principals and perpetrators must be put on trial at an international tribunal. The International Community owes this to all the victims of this massacre.

We, the under-signed, urge the current session of the Human Rights Commission to adopt a strongly-worded resolution condemning the clerical regime's atrocities. The forty-seven resolutions passed by different UN bodies during 18 consecutive years, should not minimise the importance and necessity of adopting a new resolution by this session.

On the face of the regime's blackmailing and the pressure made by its allies for excluding a new resolution, the international community must set the condition on the improvement in the regime's human rights behaviour and the acceptance of the special Representative to visit Iran. Some thing which has not yet happened.